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COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND COORDINATION
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DRAFT REPORT

Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Volodymyr Y. YELCHENKO (Ukraine)

COORDINATION QUESTIONS

Report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination for 1995
and report of the twenty-ninth series of Joint Meetings of the
Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative
Committee on Coordination

1. At its 11th and 12th meetings, on 10 June 1996, the Committee considered the annual overview report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination for 1995 (E/1996/18 and Add.1) and the report of the twenty-ninth series of Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination, held on 16 October 1995 (E/1996/4 and Corr.1).

Discussion

2. The Committee focused its discussion on a number of issues, including the role of the Committee itself and the closely related issue of the Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination, the Forum on the Future of the United Nations, African economic recovery and development, drug abuse control, the functioning of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and administrative questions.

3. Many delegations recognized the potential of the Administrative Committee on Coordination in strengthening the coordination of activities of the organizations of the United Nations system, in particular in the follow-up to

major international conferences through the establishment of ad hoc inter-agency task forces with timebound goals for the implementation of the outcomes of conferences.

4. Many delegations strongly reaffirmed the role of the Committee for Programme and Coordination in providing expert advice to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on programme and coordination issues of the United Nations and, in this context, strongly reiterated the need to strengthen the role of the Committee.

5. Other delegations questioned the usefulness of the Committee for Programme and Coordination as it presently operates and concluded that it needed to review its working procedures with a view to being more effective and efficient.

6. Many delegations strongly stressed the need to ensure that the organizations of the United Nations system receive all the resources needed for the implementation of their programmes of work, and urged all Member States, particularly the major contributor, to fulfil their financial commitments on time, in full and without conditions.

7. Many delegations regretted the abolition of the Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination. They also expressed their concern that this decision could have implications for the future role of the Committee for Programme and Coordination itself. They considered that the Committee was the only intergovernmental committee providing expert advice to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on coordination questions. Other delegations welcomed the decision to suspend the Joint Meetings and supported the proposal that the remaining coordination functions of the Committee for Programme and Coordination be moved to the Economic and Social Council.

8. In the discussions on the report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, a number of members of the Committee expressed their appreciation for the effort undertaken by the Secretary-General in organizing the Forum on the Future of the United Nations. At the same time, several others expressed concern about some of the concepts discussed at the Forum, such as those related to regional groupings, new approaches to the concepts of security, new threats to peace and the involvement of civil society at the level of the decision-making process in the United Nations. In this context, they regretted that the Secretary-General included such concepts in the report, without having any mandates from the General Assembly.

9. Some delegations noted explanations made by the representative of the Secretariat that the Forum had been an event undertaken by the Secretary-General in observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, and that the issues raised at the Forum were part of an informal occasion of reflection and self-assessment covering a number of evolving new political, economic and social challenges in today's world, and did not represent decisions for the United Nations.

10. On the issue of African economic recovery and development, some delegations welcomed the launching of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on

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Africa and noted that it represented an operational arm of both the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, and the System-wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. A number of members expressed concern about the omission of some key issues from the Special Initiative, such as, the issues of refugees in Africa, professional training, proliferation of mines and unemployment. Some delegations noted explanations made by the representative of the Secretariat that the Special Initiative did not include all priority areas, but rather included a number of specific areas where joint and/or coordinated action by several organizations of the United Nations system was possible.

11. Other delegations stressed the need for a coherent and coordinated effort by all the agencies of the United Nations system in the implementation of the Special Initiative. A number of delegations welcomed the active participation of the donor community in the Special Initiative, in particular the Bretton Woods institutions, and, in this regard, those members stressed the need to take immediate and concrete action.

12. On the subject of the follow-up to international conferences, members welcomed the establishment of the three inter-agency task forces based on the three interrelated themes of basic services for all (under the chairmanship of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund), the enabling environment for social and economic development (with the World Bank as lead agency) and employment and sustainable livelihoods (with the International Labour Organization as lead agency). Other delegations regretted that insufficient attention had been paid to the objectives of these task forces or to an analysis of the results of their work so far. A number of Committee members, however, expressed concern that the financial resources required for adequate follow-up to major international conferences were being sharply reduced. Other members stressed the importance of making efficient use of the scarce resources available. Effectiveness should be enhanced and work prioritized.

13. On the same issue, several delegations reiterated the central role of each Government in coordinating the follow-up activities to the conferences, which has to be on the basis of national priorities and strategies.

14. On the issue of procedures for presenting reports, some delegations emphasized that no decisions should be taken unilaterally. In this regard, they stressed that any decision on this matter should be examined in the context of the overall review of publication policy.

15. Some delegations welcomed the detailed information contained in the report in connection with assistance provided by the organizations of the United Nations system to countries invoking Article 50 of the Charter of the United Nations, and requested the Secretariat to continue to provide the Committee with further information on this matter in the future.

16. On the issue of international drug abuse control, a number of delegations stated that the issue of "drug demand" should also have been reflected in the report as part of the ongoing work by the Administrative Committee on Coordination in that area. In reply, some delegations noted explanations by the

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representative of the Secretariat that this aspect of the problem had, in fact, been included in the United Nations system-wide activities on the subject, and would be adequately reflected in the report to the Economic and Social Council. He further informed the Committee that the issue of international cooperation against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotics and psychotropic substances and related activities was a priority issue for the organizations of the United Nations system, as evidenced by the fact that the issue was chosen as the topic to be discussed during the high-level segment of the 1996 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council.

17. On the issue of the coordination of operational activities for development, some delegations called for the strengthening of the resident coordinator system at the country level in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 47/199 of 22 December 1992 and 50/120 of 20 December 1995, in particular with reference to the follow-up to major international conferences and the work of the ad hoc inter-agency task forces. Some delegations also requested that more information on the country strategy notes be included in future in the report.

18. With reference to the issue of access to resources, some delegations expressed the view that resources were becoming increasingly scarce and that it was, therefore, necessary for organizations of the United Nations system to focus more on how to better utilize scarce available resources. Other delegations were of the view that it was essential for organizations of the United Nations system to be able to have access to a predictable and adequate level of financial and human resources, if they were to be able to implement effectively their programmes of work.

19. With reference to administrative questions, many delegations disagreed with the proposals by the Administrative Committee on Coordination to change the composition of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). A number of delegations supported the concern expressed in the report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination regarding the critical need to restore the competitive conditions of service of the professional staff of the organizations of the United Nations system in order to enable the organizations to attract and retain staff of the highest calibre. Other delegations, however, stated that they believed that the current conditions of service of staff were adequate and that evidence of recruitment and retention difficulties must be provided before any increase could be justified.

20. A number of delegations agreed with the statement of the Administrative Committee on Coordination on the status of women in the secretariats of the United Nations system. They stressed the importance of increasing the number of women candidates for recruitment and promotion at all levels and of promoting and recruiting qualified women on a competitive basis, giving due regard to Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter.

Conclusions and recommendations

21. The Committee took note of the annual overview report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and the report of the twenty-ninth series of Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination. The Committee, nevertheless, stressed the need for documentation to be placed before the Committee with sufficient time to enable the Committee to study it, and for more information to be given on achievement by the Administrative Committee on Coordination of its objectives, to permit a better assessment of its effectiveness.
22. The Committee noted the efforts of the Secretary-General, as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, in the establishment and launching of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa early in 1996. The Committee also expressed the hope that the inter-agency task forces established to ensure improved coordination of the follow-up to international conferences, would take the Special Initiative into consideration in the implementation of their work.
23. The Committee, in stressing the importance of the continued attention by the Secretary-General to efforts of assistance to countries invoking Article 50 of the Charter of the United Nations, requested that information continue to be provided to it on this subject in the future.
24. The Committee stressed the need to provide the organizations of the United Nations system with adequate resources to implement their programmes of work, and also stressed the legal obligation of all Member States to fulfil their financial commitments on time and in full.
